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Ewe and Lamb Club Demonstration, Problems VI-XI : Extension Circular 2-81-2

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Nebraska

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION WORK
IN AGRICULTURE AND HOME ECONOMICS

1933

U. of N. Agr. College & U. S. Dept. of Agr. Cooperating
W. H. Brockaw, Director, Lincoln

Extension
Circular
~~2-66-2~~

2-81-2

EWES AND LAMB CLUB DEMONSTRATION

Problem VI

Selection and Care of the Bred Ewe.

Your Goal

Lambs which are marketed before June 15th return the greatest profits. The market price usually falls rapidly after that time and lambs make unsatisfactory gains during summer because of the heat and flies. Even though lambs are given feed in a creep from the time they will eat, which is usually at about two weeks, they must have been dropped early to be fat enough to sell well by May or June.

Early Lambing - Early Sale

Lambs which come during the second half of January, February, or the first half of March may be finished before July if they are the right kind and have proper care. It is about five months from breeding until lambing. Figure back five months from lambing time and you will find you must select ewes bred from about September 15th to November 15th to lamb between January 15th and March 15th. These early lambs may come in a blizzard, so you should have a good lambing place in mind before you get early bred ewes.

Western Ewes

Many good farm flocks have been developed from a foundation of western ewes. In the fall, sheep shipments coming to the markets are made up partly of ewes. Some of these ewes have their teeth worn until they cannot thrive on the range feeds but are still able to lamb once more under the more favorable Corn Belt conditions. At times, rangemen are reducing their flocks and younger, more valuable ewes are included in the shipments. These western ewes sell at a low figure and when mated to a good purebred mutton ram produce quite acceptable lambs. They are usually marketed with their lambs in the spring and more western ewes bought each fall, or the better ewe lambs are saved for breeding. If good rams are used and the best ewe lambs are saved each year, in a few generations an excellent flock may be developed. Western ewes are usually less infested with internal parasites than natives.

Purebred Ewes

Good purebreds will produce better and more uniform lambs than grade natives or westerns. To sell breeding stock, a registered purebred foundation is necessary. Competition and interest in the club will be greatest if all the club members use sheep of one breed. Selecting the most popular breed in the community has many advantages. Choosing good individuals bred to good rams is much more important than choosing a breed.

Age

The matter of age is important. Ewes are usually bred to produce their first lamb when they are about two years old and usually are culled from the flock when they reach six or seven. The older the ewes are, the less probable usefulness they have before them. Ewes bred to lamb when they are about one year old will never develop as they should and may have trouble delivering their lambs. Yearlings (one year old the previous spring) are most valuable to the experienced shepherd,

but the beginner can expect less trouble at lambing with ewes that have lambed before.

The age of sheep is easily determined by examining their teeth. Up to one year the sheep still carries its baby or milk teeth. These teeth are small, round, and easy to distinguish. At 12 to 14 months the central pair of milk teeth are displaced by a larger, flatter pair (permanent teeth). At two years the second pair of permanent teeth appear. At three years, the third pair of permanent teeth appear and the sheep now has six (twice as many as its age in years). At four years, the sheep has all its permanent teeth and is a full mouth. At around two or three years more, as these teeth begin to wear off, they become rounder, wider apart, and spread in a fan shaped fashion. These are known as "spreaders". Aged ewes lose their teeth passing first through the "broken-mouth" stage and then after losing all their teeth they become "gummers". Be sure to avoid spreaders, broken-mouths, and gummers in selecting your ewes.

Conformation

Sheep should have the same deep, wide, blocky appearance desired in beef cattle. The wool covering may make appearances deceiving, so sheepmen handle sheep to judge them. The back should be wide and strong, the chest deep and wide, the ribs wide sprung, and the leg plump and muscled down low. A wide short head, a short muscular neck, and short straight legs are desired. Smooth, compact shoulders, smooth hips, and a general appearance of compactness and refinement without weakness are important.

Fleece

The wool should be fine and soft (close crimp or "kinks" indicates fineness). Long fibers and a firm, compact feel are desirable as they indicate a heavy clip. There should be a moderate amount of yolk (yellowish grease) in the wool. Clean, bright fleece is most desired. Any hair or black fibers are very objectionable in the wool. Western ewes will have finer, shorter wool with more yolk than sheep of strictly mutton breeding.

Disposition

Quiet, active, alert, bright-eyed ewes with energetic motherly dispositions are most desirable.

Health and Constitution

Look for pink, healthy skins and pronounced strength and activity.

It will be a good plan to have your County Agent or Local Leader assist you in the selection of your ewes, as the right kind of animals are highly essential to success.

Feeding

When your ewes arrive home, don't try to fatten them all at once. To do so may result in founder. It is a good idea to find out from their original owner what they have been getting and then continue this feed as near as possible, until they become accustomed to their new surroundings. Then you can gradually change to the best ration of the feeds which you have available. The ration a pregnant ewe should receive depends to a large degree on her condition of fatness. Do not have her either too fat or too lean but preferably just in a good healthy active flesh. If the ewes are very poor, it will be wise to feed them up to a pound of grain daily

to bring them to where they should be for lambing. This ration might consist of corn, oats, and bran in equal parts; or corn 10, oats 10, oil meal 3; or oats 3, bran 2, all of the above rations to be fed with alfalfa or clover hay. Under ordinary circumstances where a good legume hay is available, no grain will be needed until about a month before lambing, at which time some grain should be added to the ration to insure a good milk flow. Usually 1/2 pound daily of grain is enough. Oats alone with legume hay is not a bad feed. Prairie hay should be supplemented with a little oil meal or bran to prevent constipation and supply protein. It is especially important that the ewes' bowels should be well open at lambing time. Salt and clean, fresh water (not too cold in winter) should be available at all times and remember to never change a sheep's feed quickly.

Exercise

Exercise is about the best conditioner there is for your ewe. See to it that she gets plenty of it. If her sleeping quarters can be placed at a good distance from her feed and water so that she will have to walk two or three miles a day, it will be a good thing.

Care

Dogs should not be allowed to molest the ewes and their quarters should be as near dog proof as possible, since sheep are naturally of a nervous temperament. No ewe can be expected to do her best if in constant danger of attack by dogs. The sheep shed itself should be clean, dry, well bedded, and free from draughts. It need not be warm but should afford protection from rain and snow. The more light and fresh air it affords the better. Be sure the shed and feeding space is large enough to prevent crowding.

In handling your ewe never grab her by the wool. If you need to catch her, drive her in the barn or a corner and get her by the neck or the hind flank. It is an unfailing sign of ignorance to catch a sheep and hold it by its wool, and is also bad and harmful practice. It is no worse to handle boys and girls by their hair than to handle sheep by their wool. It is not a good idea to allow sheep to pasture where burrs and weeds will work into their wool.

To begin your sheep project right you should:

1. Select sound western ewes or good purebred ewes,
2. Pick ewes bred to a good mutton ram for early lambs,
3. Look well to the fleece, conformation, and disposition of the ewes,
4. Pick animals of strong constitution and good health,
5. Feed a well-balanced growing ration,
6. See that the ewes take exercise,
7. Never let dogs worry, frighten, or harm your sheep,
8. Avoid handling them by the wool,
9. Provide clean, airy, dry shed room.

At lambing time the ewe requires more attention than at any other period. Her management and care at this most critical time will constitute your next problem.

(Approved by the Animal Husbandry Department)

SHEEP CLUB DEMONSTRATION Problem VII "THE EWE AT LAMBING TIME."

Twenty-four hours a day during the lambing season is the price that sheep men pay for profit. In other words they are continually on the job during this critical period. It will be no mistake for you to follow this example when the time comes for lambing your ewes arrives.

Under ordinary circumstances the ewe will lamb 21 weeks after the breeding date. If you have a record of the breeding date - and you should have - you will know when to prepare for this event. Some of the things to be looked after at lambing time are: -

FEEDING

The ewe should receive grain enough during the gestation period to be in quite good condition. The ration should be laxative toward lambing time. Right at lambing time fresh water for about 24 hours is sufficient. After lambing time feed alfalfa hay using oats and bran very sparingly, increasing the ration slowly as the lamb becomes more able to take the milk. As the lamb begins to get older, raise the ewe's ration gradually to one or one and one-half pounds of grain with plenty of good dry roughage. A good grain mixture to use is as follows: Corn 3 parts, Oats 6 parts, Linseed Oil Meal 1 part. If silage is available it can be fed to advantage giving one and one-half to three and one-half pounds per ewe daily. If fed too heavily immediately following lambing, udder troubles often result.

EXERCISE

Too much emphasis cannot be placed on the importance of exercise for pregnant ewes, since, if they have plenty of exercise, less difficulty is likely to be experienced at lambing time. One of the most satisfactory ways to get them to take a sufficient amount of exercise is to have out their roughage and scatter it in bunches in the field where they will have to gather it up. They should be offered shelter in bad weather.

CLIPPING

It is a good plan to clip all tags (matted, caked, filthy locks of wool) from the udder and lower rear parts of the ewe a week or so before lambing time. This makes for more sanitary conditions and makes it easier for the lamb to locate the teat. A very young lamb is as likely to suckle one of these tags as the teat itself and in this way fail to get the early nourishment so vital to its welfare.

LAMBING PENS

Just before lambing the ewe should be placed in a small individual pen about 5 feet square (or a trifle larger) that has been well bedded, and is warm and well protected from draughts and bad weather. In such a pen she can be watched closely and proper assistance and care given her.

EQUIPMENT

The shepherd should have a goodly supply of clean rags or burlap, some place to keep warm, and a liking for his job, as well as a good background of experience, before attempting to lamb a large flock. The ewes in-lamb should be kept in one pen, the lambing ewes in the small pens, and the lambed ewes in another. This permits of a more careful watch of each of these groups. In small flocks this division is not so necessary.

LAMBING

Before a ewe is ready to lamb she becomes restless, shows a desire to be away from the other ewes and often goes over to a corner by herself. At this time there is a noticeable falling away in the rump, and the udder usually - though not always - fills with milk. When these signs appear the ewe should be confined to her lambing pen and watched closely.

The normal presentation of a lamb is fore feet first, with the head and nose extended between them. If it comes head, nose and one fore foot first it can usually be pulled, but if presented with either fore legs or head or both turned back, it will be necessary to push it back and straighten it out. A rear foot presentation is difficult to deliver but possible. In helping at this time both hands and arms should be clean and well oiled and great care taken not to injure the ewe. Under ordinary circumstances no difficulty will be encountered, but if trouble should arise, it will be a good idea to have your father or a veterinarian help you immediately.

The first three requirements of a new born lamb are: air, warmth, and milk. You should see that it is provided with all three immediately after birth. If breathing does not start at once wipe the phlegm from its nose and mouth. Open the mouth, clean out the phlegm and blow forcibly into the nostrils and mouth. Squeezing lightly on the chest and slapping swartly over the heart will usually help induce breathing and heart action. A little strong coffee or ginger to cause the lamb to gag and open up the lung passage is often a good thing. Rub the lamb dry with rags or burlap (the ewe will help with licking) as it tends to induce circulation. If the lamb becomes chilled immerse it all but the nose in water as hot as is comfortable to the hand, and when thoroly warmed, wipe it dry and wrap in warmed cloths. A normal lamb is born hungry and if it does not find the teats, should be helped to nurse at once. This will help remarkably in getting it off to the right kind of a start.

DISOWNED LAMBS

The ewe knows her lamb at first by smell, and can recognize it in no other way. It is therefore a good idea to keep the lambs and ewe in the small pen until they are thoroly acquainted. This will prevent the difficulty of disowned lambs. A young lamb is inclined to go wherever its legs will carry it and in case of twins or triplets the ewe cannot follow them all. The result usually is that she disowns one unless they are kept near her until she has owned and recognized all of them. A day or two in these pens is usually sufficient. A disowned lamb can often be restored to ownership by rubbing the ewe's milk on its head, back and rump and on the ewe's nose. Or a ewe may be tied or confined to a small pen with a lamb until she finally adopts it.

ORPHAN LAMBS

Orphan lambs should be given a laxative (a small teaspoonful of raw linseed oil) as their first food, and then be fed cows milk from nipples bottle. Feed small amounts (2 to 4 tablespoonfuls) at two hours intervals for a few days increasing with time to fewer and larger feeds. An orphan lamb can often be given to a heavy milking ewe by the methods mentioned under disowned lambs. Or if a ewe has lost her lamb she can often be coaxed to adopt another by tying the skin of the lost lamb over the back of the one she is to adopt.

UDDER TROUBLES

With heavy milking ewes, or where ewes are fed too heavily immediately after lambing, the udder often becomes caked and swollen. Handle these cases much as you would a similar case in a dairy cow, milking the udder out well and applying anti phlogisten or some other penetrating ointment. Careful attention should be given to see that the lamb is getting the milk from both sides of the udder else trouble is sure to follow. In serious cases of udder trouble give it careful attention and feed the lamb cows milk until the udder is in better shape.

SHELTER

Do not make the mistake of thinking the ewes and lambs should be kept in heated houses. After the lamb has reached a day or two in age it and its mother can be turned in with the other ewes and lambs. It then needs only a dry, clean, well ventilated, well protected shed for shelter.

Your sheep at lambing time will require constant care, and your success in sheep club work will hinge largely on the attention given the ewes and lambs at this time, so be sure and don't fail to:

1. Feed your ewes carefully and well.
2. Clip the tags from the udder.
3. Have small, clean, dry pens for lambing.
4. Be there to help the ewe in lambing if necessary.
5. See that the lamb gets air, dryness, warmth, milk.
6. Avoid disowned and orphan lambs by proper care.

Profits come from properly feeding and caring for the ewe and her lamb. Study this carefully in your next problem.

Prepared by O. O. Waggener. Approved by the Department of Animal Husbandry
University of Nebraska.

SHEEP CLUB DEMONSTRATION
Problem VIII
"UNTIL LAMBS ARE WEANED"

No matter how strong and well bred your lamb may be at birth, it will never grow into a large, strong, healthy sheep unless it is properly fed. If you paid good money for a well bred ewe, you are making a mistake to stunt your lamb's growth by not feeding it enough of the right kind of feed to grow it into the sort of animal you will be proud to own. The best bred animal will look like a scrub if not given the right kind of feed and proper care as a lamb. The greatest advantage of having a well bred lamb lies in the fact that it will respond to the right kind of feeding and care, whereas no amount of feeding can we make good individual out of a scrub lamb.

FEEDING

For about the first two weeks the ewe's milk will be enough to take care of the lamb's growing needs, but at about this age a separate lamb creep will prove a profitable arrangement. Fence off a dry, well pastured corner of the lot or pasture and leave large enough openings between uprights to permit the entrance of the lambs, but not the ewes. In the enclosure, which should be large enough to prevent crowding and located in such a place that the lambs and ewes will be near it often, place a small hay feeder filled with leafy green alfalfa or clover hay. A flat-bottomed grain trough should be provided with a center board over it to prevent the lambs from jumping into it. In this, put some ground feeds, such as oats, one-third; bran, one-third; and cracked corn, one-third; with a small addition of linseed oil meal. Many feed crushed oats and bran in equal amounts. Just a sprinkle in the trough is enough at first and as the lambs begin to take to it add a little more, never feeding more than they will clean up in a few hours. Lambs will learn to eat sooner and will fatten faster if confined to the creep for a while each day. They can be driven into the creep, flapping old sacks to scare them, with very little trouble after a time or two. After they are eating well many feeders confine the lambs to the creep during the day while the ewes are out on pasture. They may be put in again late at night and let out the first thing in the morning. Sheep are very particular about their feeds so you must be careful to keep the trough clean and the feed fresh and palatable. Give left-over feeds to the hogs. It is a good idea to always keep a fresh supply of clean water where the lambs, as well as the ewes, can get to it.

DOCKING

At about ten days or two weeks of age the lambs should be docked. A long tail is a clumsy, unsanitary and unnecessary addition to either a ewe or a ram, and it should be removed before it has grown so large that its removal will cause the loss of much blood. The tail can either be removed with a clean, sharp knife, or with docking pinchers. In small flocks the former is usually used. To use the knife, simply hold the lamb between your legs permitting it to stand upright. Then push the skin of the tail up toward the body as far as you can with the left hand. With the knife in the right hand place the blade below the tail about one inch from the lamb's body and with the thumb on top of the tail, it can then be easily removed by simply drawing the knife upward and pressing down with the thumb. Most lambs will not bleed severely at this age, but if they should it might be a good idea to

twist the "tail" artery with a pair of tweezers or tie the skin together below the wound with a plain cotton string. A little pine tar or other antiseptic on the wound will tend to keep down infection and stimulate healing. Ordinarily the lamb will scarcely feel the effects of this operation. Do not excite or run the lambs before docking as it tends to cause profuse bleeding. If the docking pinchers are used a thin board should be placed between the animal's body and the iron to prevent the heat from scorching the body.

CASTRATING

Unless your lambs are very well bred you will probably want to castrate the male lambs. This is a simple process and can be accomplished at the same time the lambs are docked. Place the lamb on its back, cut off the lower one third of the scrotum with a clean sharp knife, then pull out the testicles and the adhering cords, and apply a little lard and turpentine mixed to a soft salve. In large flocks experienced lamb castrators remove the testicles with their teeth thereby greatly facilitating the process. In small flocks, however, this practice is seldom followed.

SHEARING

Under ordinary circumstances April is the month to shear. If the ewes have good shelter the shearing should be done during the first good warm spell of the month. A shorn ewe will take her lamb to shelter out of the rain, whereas a woolled one literally "does not have sense enough to come in out of the rain." The wool clip is usually about as heavy at this time as later and its removal will give the ewe more freedom and retard the work of ticks. Unless the ewes have ample shelter it might be well to retard the shearing season until about the first of May. Shear, however, before the wool slips.

Shearing is a task that requires experience, patience and judgment. It will take the average man several seasons to learn to do it right. In general the following suggestions should help you.

1. Equipment

In small flocks hand shears are usually used, altho power shears if available clip closer and are easier to handle. Paper wool twine is cheapest and best for tying up fleeces - do not use binder's twine as its fibers shed into the wool and cannot be separated out except by picking. One pound of wool string will tie twelve (12) to fifteen (15) fleeces. Regulation seven to seven and one-half foot wool sacks holding 300 pounds of wool are best. Shearing should be done on a smooth, clean board platform.

2. Preparation.

Washing is an out-of-date custom and is unnecessary. Wool from washed sheep is discriminated against on the market. Do not try to shear sheep after a full feed, a tight paunch shuts off their wind and makes them struggle. Be careful not to dirty the wool with hay leaves, chaff, or dirt in the shearing platform, and make sure that clippers, oil, twine, sacks, etc., are all ready and that the fleeces are dry before starting.

3. Shearing.

Set the sheep on its rump with the back of its neck and shoulders against your left leg, and with its chin held back with the left arm. Your position, of course, is in the rear of the sheep. Then open the fleece beginning on the right shoulder and working up toward the chin. After shearing this part with straight

long strokes toward the left (going around the sheep), open the fleece down the right center of the brisket and underline shearing around to the back bone and working down. Be careful to keep the skin pulled tight as it helps in avoiding "button-holing" the sheep. Never pull up on the wool being clipped, it is sure to result in a cut. Straighten the hind legs by pushing down on the stifle joint. When the right side is clipped, turn the sheep half around and clip the other side in the same manner, shearing from the back bone around to the front and working from head to rump. Be careful to clip close and leave the fleece intact; second clips lower fleece value and broken fleeces are hard to tie. Never tie or abuse the sheep. It only makes it struggle to get free. You should have an experienced man to help you in learning to shear.

4. Tying.

Having clipped the remaining tags, put the small pieces in the center of the fleece in folding, and gather in the intact fleece by tucking the edges under with the clean or shorn side out. Having thrown away the dirty tags and folded the fleece snugly, tie it firmly two ways with the wool string. Sack at once and store in a clean, dry place until sold.

WEANING

Leave the lambs with the ewes as long as possible without too much risk from parasites. If pastures are clean, lambs - especially ewe lambs to be kept in the flock - are often with their mothers until weaned naturally. Where there is danger of stomach worms, weaning is usually practiced at ten (10) to twelve (12) weeks of age or at the beginning of real warm weather. Just before weaning put the ewes on very short pasture and keep feeding the lambs well. Then take the ewes away leaving the lambs on the old pasture and keep so far away from the ewes that they cannot hear each others bleating; or move the lambs to fresh pasture with a creep and leave the ewes on the old pasture. At any odds the ewes should be kept on "poor-pickings" until dry and watched and milked out if udder troubles seem likely. Perhaps the most important things are creep feeding the lambs early, giving them plenty during the weaning period, and limiting the ewe's feeding at that time. As warm weather and parasite time arrives, it will be an excellent plan to arrange to put the lambs on different pasture about once each two weeks as this seems to keep back stomach worm infestation.

April is the big month for the sheep man and it will pay him well to make a practice of:

1. Creep-feeding the lambs early and well.
2. Docking and castrating at around two weeks of age.
3. Shearing early and providing good shelter for the ewes.
4. Using standard shearing equipment.
5. Storing wool in a clean, dry place.
6. Weaning wisely and in time to avoid stomach worms.

Your next problem will be the prevention of lamb and ewe troubles.

(Approved by the Animal Husbandry Department.)

SHEEP CLUB DEMONSTRATION
Problem IX
LAMB AND EWE TROUBLES.

"An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." This old adage will certainly hold true in raising lambs. No other class of animals respond more readily to good treatment than will sheep. Most troubles with sheep can be prevented if the proper steps are taken. Keep the lambs and ewes dry in cold, wet weather. Feed regularly in clean troughs, and handle them in a quiet, patient manner, for these are the requirements for success in growing out lambs and handling sheep.

Each specific sheep disease has its symptoms but a disease does not always display identical symptoms on different animals and certain similar symptoms may result from a number of different diseases. Your lamb may be sick and one of several diseases may be the cause. Therefore, in important cases, it is best not to depend too much on one's own knowledge but advisable to call a veterinarian. Some of the most common diseases and ailments are discussed in this problem.

Constipation

If your lamb appears dumpish, refuses to suck, and otherwise acts strangely, altho he got along in fine shape previous to acting this way, he probably is constipated. Give one to two ounces of castor or linseed oil. An injection of scapy water or raw linseed oil will bring the lamb back to normal in short time. Oil meal or cake added to the ewe's ration will help in preventing this trouble.

Scours (Diarrhea)

This is many times caused by germs or parasites. Isolate affected lambs. Convulsions sometimes indicate indigestion. The fourth stomach of the lamb may be impacted with curdled milk. The lamb will not eat and will pass a hard, bad smelling dung in small quantities.

Give epsom salt, 2 ounces in a little water or milk or 1 to 3 ounces of castor or linseed oil. Do not put animal back on full ration too rapidly.

Sore Eyes

If the lamb's eyes have a fiery reddish color or become milky in appearance, wash them with a 3 per cent solution of boric acid or wash them out with lukewarm water and put several drops of a 15 percent argyrol solution in the eye twice a day. Keep the animal in a dark place.

Sore Mouth

Scabs and sores on the mouth should be opened and treated with a solution of liquid dips. Swab the mouth out daily with 2 percent potassium permanganate solution. A tablespoonful of borax in a pail of water will help to keep sores in the mouth closed. If the lamb is unable to suck it must be fed artificially.

Stomach Worms

Lambs are very susceptible to the attack of stomach worms. They often are responsible for the death of lambs. The eggs are found in the droppings.

of the sheep. They hatch and little worms crawl upon grass blades and are swallowed by grazing lambs. The ewes should be treated before lambs are born. Pasture your lambs on pasture that is free from eggs of stomach worms. Lambs to be marketed usually are not pastured at all, and so avoid worms.

If your lamb does become infested, have your druggist mix a one percent solution of blue vitrol (copper sulphate) and a one percent strength "tobacco solution." Give each lamb 3 tablespoonfuls. If you have a sick lamb give a smaller dose. 100 C.C. (about 3 ounces) of this solution is used to treat the ewes.

Ticks

Sheep ticks are easily found as they are large, live on the skin and suck blood. Lambs do not do well when infested with these parasites. To rid sheep of ticks dip thoroughly and repeat in about two weeks with a good standard dip.

Scab

Scab is a very serious disease caused by a small mite working under the skin. A sheep infected with this parasite will become very restless, bite the infected regions and scratch with his hind-feet. Use a good dip such as the lime sulphur dip and soak the animal well.

Maggots

Another pest that needs the shepherd's close attention during the fly time is the maggot. They are caused by blow-flies laying eggs in the filthy places in the sheep. These eggs hatch and burrow their way into the animal. If a portion of the wool becomes filthy, cut it off and cleanse the parts thoroughly. Put on a little dip as the odor of dip will keep the flies away. If an animal becomes infested, clean out parts infected, soak with Benzine. This will kill both the blow fly maggot and screw fly maggot. When dry, apply Pine tar.

Bloat

Alfalfa, the clovers and rape are apt to cause fermentation in the paunch which causes a rapid formation of a large quantity of gas in the stomach. Breathing becomes difficult and finally suffocation results if the animal is not relieved. Tie a stick in the animal's mouth, and have the animal stand with front parts higher than hind parts. In acute cases the left flank should be punctured with trocar and canula in its most prominent place. This will allow the gas to escape from the paunch or stomach, but it is a difficult and rather dangerous procedure.

Colds

Isolate affected lambs and provide warm, dry quarters and good feeds. Smear pine tar around nostrils. Give a teaspoonful of carbonate of iron and as much quinine as can be held on a nickel should be given every other day for three or four doses.

Impaction

The milk may become hard in the intestines of suckling lambs, particularly the best nourished ones. Give internally one or two tablespoonfuls of castor oil and an injection of warm soapy water or oil.

Lameness

Many things can cause lameness. May be caused by a small pore just above the hoof becoming filled with mud that can be pressed out.

Foot Rot

If animal becomes infected with foot rot, cut away the diseased parts and treat with a salve of blue vitrol and lard. Keep the foot protected until healed. Keep animals out of muddy pens and lots.

Caked Bag and Garget

Milk out the ewe four or five times a day and do not allow her to be exposed. Apply cloths wrung from hot water and turpentine. Liniment or tincture of iodine may be applied. Animals which recover are usually fattened for slaughter.

Infectious Abortion

If a ewe loses her lamb prematurely she should be isolated at once. Abortion is usually caused by a contagious germ similar to the one causing bovine abortion. Treatment is of no avail but ordinarily after one or two abortions the ewe will be all right again. Prevent abortion by isolation of the infected animals until all discharges cease.

Approved by Animal Pathology & Animal Husbandry Depts.
University of Nebraska.

SHEEP CLUB DEMONSTRATION

Problem X

SUGGESTIONS ON SHOWING

The next time you are at a party look around and see if anyone there is wearing overalls. It's funny that they'd all clean up, comb their hair, and put on their Sunday-best isn't it? Why doesn't everybody come just as they were when at work and why are the shoes all shined, hands all clean, shirts freshly ironed, pants pressed, and everything in general so spic and span, when only an hour before every man in the crowd had on his milk splattered overalls? Everybody, including yourself, seems anxious to look his best because he knows the others there will judge him a lot by how he looks.

Sheep don't get to go to as many parties as men but they are more strictly judged when they do. Your ewe or lamb won't have a ghost of a show with the others in its class at the local, county or state fair party if you don't have it in its Sunday-best. All the rest will be -- why not yours?

This preparation for the show should begin long before the show itself, if your ewe or lamb is to be really ready at that time. If well fed and in good condition other details about the preparation of sheep for the show ring is a comparatively simple thing. A poorly fed or half starved animal, however, cannot be expected to show to advantage so begin your preparation early by caring for your animals properly.

About three months before the fair, blanket show sheep to keep out dirt, see that a clean feed yard is provided. Blanketing brings out the yolk (grease) in the wool uniformly and assures its even distribution. It will help the looks of the head and neck if they too are covered by the blanket.

A good sharp knife serves very well as a trimming instrument for the feet. Trim the hoofs squarely and so as to avoid a sled-runner appearance, being especially careful not to cut away so much of the horny part that it will make the soles tender. Hoofs are more easily trimmed immediately after a rainy spell than during a hot dry time.

The most particular part of show preparation, however, comes in the last few weeks. It is the "blocking" of the fleece. This is done by clipping the fleece over the top in such a way as to accentuate the width and levelness of the animal's top line and the straightness and depth of its body, and at the same time hide as effectively as possible any defects it may have. By slapping the fleece smartly with the card, allowing the wrist to remain flexible and then drawing it backward and upward, the long neds of the fleece are pulled out. This can be done better if the wool is dampened. Dip a brush in water, with a little dip in it, and sprinkle the sheep occasionally as you work. Clip these where you wish to shorten the fleece until the back appears wide, flat, and level, the sides straight, the rump level and square, and the head and neck short.

wide and blocky. Card the fleece over as it makes it appear more dense and compact. The clipping process should be over in time for the wool to regain its natural appearance by show time. It will be a good idea to get an experienced man to show you how this blocking job is done.

In clipping always handle the animal carefully and never abuse it. Trimming is quite an ordeal and the sheep may become tired and nervous, but punishment or mistreatment will only serve to irritate it more. Never pull the wool, or stick your fingers in the fleece. The sheep can be haltered and tied for the clipping process. In training a lamb to pose hold it below the jaw with your left hand and stand to its left, facing it. When moving it about, place the left hand below the jaw and the right on the dock. It should stand squarely on all four feet, head erect, and ordinarily facing away from the judge.

The things you will need at the fair include: a blanket, wool card, hand shears, brush, and feeds. You should have these ready and take them along with you.

In the show ring, it is the combination of the best man and animal that wins. Watch the judge closely, do as he indicates, always be courteous and above all take the placing like a man. Everybody cannot win, but stick with it and you'll finally come out on top in the long run.

Competitive showing of sheep is a great game and one that requires experience and skill to be successful. You cannot expect to learn it all in a single year but in the main the following suggestions should prove helpful:

1. Your sheep must be at its best.
2. Good condition of fatness is desirable.
3. Wash the fleece three months before the show.
4. Blanket the animal.
5. Trim the feet and fleece carefully and well.
6. Handle the animal patiently and without abuse.

The next and final problem will be relative to the management of the farm flock.

SHEEP CLUB DEMONSTRATION

Problem XI

Flock Management

It is most profitable to have lambs come in the late winter or early spring if warm quarters can be provided at lambing time. These early lambs are given grain in a creep while sucking and marketed before June 15 weighing 60 to 80 pounds. Later lambs must sell on a much less favorable market, and they are more troubled by stomach worms and other parasites.

The gestation period of sheep (time from breeding to lambing) averages about 147 days, slightly less than 5 months. Ewes must be bred between about September 15 and November 15 to lamb during the second half of January, February, and the first half of March. Ewes do not ordinarily breed during warm weather. Properly handled, most of them will breed in the fall when the nights get cool.

Flushing

Ewes are more certain breeders and a greater percentage of twins are produced if they are gaining rapidly at breeding time. Experienced sheepmen have a good pasture for the breeding season and feed some grain for a few weeks before during the breeding season. This is known as "flushing."

Ewes with broken mouths (part of their teeth fallen out) or spoiled udders, or ewes that have failed to produce satisfactorily, should be culled from the flock before breeding time. Ewe lambs are usually bred to lamb the first time when they are about 2 years old.

Western Ewes

Western ewes breed more readily in the early fall than most native ewes. Ewes that have passed their usefulness under the severe range conditions but are still able to lamb once more under favorable Corn Belt conditions are often available on the market in the fall at a very reasonable price. Many farmers buy these ewes and mate them to a blocky mutton ram for early lambs. Both the ewes and lambs are disposed of in the spring. This is one of our most successful systems of lamb production in Nebraska. A club might buy a bunch of these ewes and a ram in the fall and divide the ewes after they were bred, sharing the cost of the ewes and ram and the expenses during the breeding season.

The Ram

Only a purebred ram of one of the mutton breeds should be used. Care in selecting a good ram and the expense of a superior individual will be more than repaid whether he is to be mated to purebreds or grades. The ram should be kept in condition during the breeding season by feeding about 1 pound per day of grain. A mixture of oats 3 parts and bran 1 part by weight is good. He should be accustomed to grain gradually during a period of 2 weeks to a month before the breeding season if he has had pasture only during the summer. Usually the ram is let run with the

ewes only a short time each day for best results, or he may be left with them in the pasture during the night. Some preparation, such as a paste of lamp black and water, should be smeared on the ram's breast to mark the ewes bred if they cannot be observed closely. If some of the ewes do not get bred early, you may know it in this manner.

Late Lambs

Sometimes there is not equipment for early lambs. When this is true and there is considerable very rough pasture land or other feed particularly suited for sheep, late lambs may be raised. Ordinarily, the ewes are bred in December and the lambs produced with little care or expense. It is necessary to take special care to prevent stomach worms and to provide plenty of cool shade if late lambs are to do well. The aim in producing late lambs is to keep the labor and expenses low, but flushing, docking, and castration should be practiced.

Winter Feed

Meadows or stalk fields often supply most of the ewe's feed in the early winter. Alfalfa hay is fed in addition after frost kills the grass. Rye sometimes furnishes good fall pasture. If the ewes are in fair condition, little or no grain will be needed until 6 to 8 weeks before lambing. If alfalfa hay is not available, a little bran or a tablespoon or 2 of linseed oil meal daily should be fed for its laxative effect as well as to supply protein or silage and a little cottonseed meal will supply laxative and protein if silage is available. Usually not more than 2 pounds of silage per head daily is fed.

About 1/2 pound of grain per day is fed along toward lambing time. One ration recommended is corn 4 parts, linseed meal 1 part by weight with alfalfa hay. Another is corn 10 parts, oats 10 parts, linseed meal 3 parts by weight with alfalfa hay.

Exercise

Exercise is of the utmost importance for bred ewes. While they are ranging in fields this will be taken care of. Many sheepmen feed the roughage 1/2 mile from the sheds to force the ewes to take a daily walk. Paralysis often causes serious losses among ewes that have not exercised enough. An open shed on high, well drained ground is desirable for shelter. Sheep should not be forced to feed outside in snow or rain storms during the winter. Clean bedding will keep the wool from being soiled.

Approved by Animal Husbandry Department, University of Nebraska.